

SPORTS



Tigers beat Banks, must be mistake-free in Thomson

If there were any questions about how the Washington-Wilkes Tigers were going to perform under the direction of a new head coach and staff for the first time, some answers were provided last Friday night.

Despite the youth of the team and despite a week of sickness, W-W opened the 2009 season with a convincing win over AA Banks County, 34-21. Still, though he was happy to get the win, Head Coach Lee Hutto

wants to do better.

"We're still making mistakes that a young football team makes. We had six penalties and two of them brought back touchdowns," Hutto said. "That was disappointing because they were penalties that were 10-15 yards behind the play and really had no bearing on the play itself," he added.

But even though the Tigers are making those mental errors, Hutto said, "We did cut back on the number of mistakes we made against Greene County and that's encouraging. We had fewer blown assignments so there was some improvement there."

But probably what made it the toughest on the Tigers at Banks County was the fact that so many of the players had been sick with the flu most of the week. At one point, 17 key players were all out and unable to practice. All of the Tiger halfback and defensive backs were missing from practice at one time, according to Hutto, and many of them didn't get back until Thursday. Those players had only one shortened day of practice and then had to turn around and play a ball game on Friday after having been out all week.

"It really hurt us on Friday because so many kids just hadn't had the practice time," Hutto said. "But it says a lot for our kids that we were still able to go out and win even with all the adversity."

On the positive side, Hutto said, "We were able to run the football, which is a good thing." With 426 yards to his team's credit, that is something of an understatement. It was more than double the Leopards' rushing total and three Tiger stars shined especially brightly.

Eric Scott, Teverrius Jones, and Deon Jackson, all juniors, each had spectacular long runs of 75, 57, and 51 yards, respectively. Scott was individually responsible for a whopping 224 yards on 14 carries for an average of 16 yards per carry and one touchdown. Jones, with three touchdowns in the game, carried the ball for 109 yards in 14 attempts. Jackson averaged 8.6 yards per carry for 69 yards and one touchdown.

The Tiger passing game was al-

Tigers vs. Banks Co.

	W-W	BC
First Downs	11	13
First Downs Rushing	9	10
Yards Rushing	426	195
Yards Passing	23	29
Passes	2-3-0	2-8-0
Total Yards	449	224
No. Penalties	6	6
Yds. Penalized	65	45
Fumbles/lost	4/2	2/2

Score by quarters

Tigers	7	13	6	8	- 34
Banks County	6	7	0	8	- 21

most non-existent with only three attempts. But two of those attempts connected: one to Scott was good for 20 yards and a first down; the other, a short toss to Akeimos Coleman was good for two points on a PAT.

The Tiger defense was a little surprised early in the game when the Leopards lined up on offense. "Banks did some things and gave us some different looks," Hutto explained. "We had a game plan for certain formations and they came out and did things a little bit different. We adjusted after the first couple of drives and I thought, defensively, the kids gave a good effort."

The coach said Tyrance Ashmore played well defensively and reported that freshman "Brian Hardgree started again and played exceptionally well." Hardgree had two fumble recoveries, one of which he ran back for a touchdown, only to be called back on a penalty.

"But we still gave up too many yards rushing," Hutto said. "That's something that we really need to improve on. We've got to do a better job of tackling. We've got to keep giving a good effort and keep getting better," he added.

Coming up this Friday night, the Tigers will face a familiar rival at the Brickyard in Thomson. The Bulldogs didn't play last week and the only action they've seen was in a loss to Lincoln County in their Jamboree game. No doubt, they will want to take that out on the Tigers.

"They are a typical Thomson team. They are big, and they're



BRANDON TURNER LEADS THE WAY FOR TEVERRIUS JONES
The fleet-footed quarterback had 109 yards rushing and scored three touchdowns against Banks.

strong, and they're fast," Hutto reported. "The thing about Thomson is – they're going to line up and hit you," he continued.

Game time is 7:30 in Thomson and fans are encouraged to arrive early for good seating.

"When you're playing somebody like Thomson, you have to be physical because it's just going to be a physical, hard-nosed game," Hutto said. "We've got to hit them back. We can't go in there and be intimidated by them."

Thomson promises to be one of the best teams the Tigers will play all year and according to Hutto, they're better than Greene County and they're better than Banks County. "We have to play well," he said. "We can't have the mistakes because Thomson is just too good."

With an exceptional quarterback calling the signals, the Bulldogs are expected to throw the ball a little bit more than they have in the past and they have a potentially explosive

offense. "We've got to try to control the clock by getting first downs and moving the chains, keeping their offense off the field," Hutto said.

"Technically, we're not supposed to beat Thomson," the coach contin-

ued. "So we've got nothing to lose. We're going to go out there and play loose, play aggressively, have a good time, and get after them. We're not going to leave anything in the bag – we're going to throw it all out there and hopefully pull out a win."

SOUTHERN FRIED FOOTBALL

with CLAUDE CLEATS

Welcome to the 2009 College Football season, fans! Toe meets leather tonight!

Who are the darlings of Dixie as we eagerly anticipate the year's first action? For what it's worth, here is Old Claude's pre-season Dixie Dozen.

1. – **Florida** – Tim Tebow and company are not only best in the South, but also in the Nation.

2. – **Ole Miss** – The Rebels have not been this talented since the early 1960s.

3. – **Virginia Tech** – Even after losing their top RB, the Hokies should be headed to the Orange Bowl or maybe the BCS Championship Game.

4. – **Alabama** – The Tide is tough, but seven starters have departed on offense, including QB John Parker Wilson.

5. – **Georgia Tech** – The Jackets have the best coach in the ACC and run an offense that gives opposing defensive coordinators nightmares.

6. – **LSU** – Les Miles' squad is good, but they face a killer schedule (UGA, Bama, and Ole Miss on the road and Florida at home).

7. – **Georgia** – The Dawgs are stingy from several upset losses last year. Coach Richt has some talent, but much of it is inexperienced.

8. – **Clemson** – Death Valley, S.C., will be rocking, but a schedule that includes Georgia Tech, TCU, Miami, FSU, and N.C. State is formidable.

9. – **Miami** – A murderous opening four game stretch will test the Canes' mettle.

10. – **South Florida** – A 10-win season and a BCS bowl berth are not out of the question.

11. – **N.C. State** – Tom O'Brian has the Pack on a roll. They play eight home games (most in the FBS). Don't miss the opener vs. South Carolina next Thursday night on ESPN.

12. – **Southern Miss** – Looking for this season's BCS buster? It may just be the Golden Eagles.

Possible Breakthroughs – North Carolina, FSU, Arkansas, Tennessee.

Finally after waiting impatiently since last January, King Football returns this week to college campuses all over America. In the Southeast this is the BEST time of year, except for Christmas and Easter.

The exhilaration felt at the opening kickoff after months of anticipation is unmatched by any other collegiate or professional sport. Make no mistake about it, college football reigns supreme in Dixie.

Let's take a quick look at the key opening week match-ups across our region.

South Carolina at N.C. State – This is a critical game for both teams, but especially the Gamecocks. State is a slight favorite, but an outstanding performance by Cock QB Garcia could tip the scales Carolina's way. The Wolfpack defense is too tough to let that happen, however. **N.C. State by 6.**

Georgia at Oklahoma State – It is tempting to go with the Dawgs in this one, but question marks at QB, RB, and DB make it safer to pick the Cowboys. **Oklahoma State by 7.**

Alabama vs Virginia Tech – The Tide crushed Clemson in this Georgia Dome opener in 2008 and hastened Tiger head coach Bowden's demise. Bama will be favored again this year, but Frank Beamer's Hokies play tough, rugged football unlike Bowden's Tigers finesse game. Tech's rushing leader is out for this one, but its special teams will make the difference. **Virginia Tech by 4.**

LSU at Washington – A rebuilt Bengal Tiger squad travels to the Great Northwest to face the once proud Huskies. Unless LSU turns the ball over frequently the boys from the bayou should win handily. **LSU by 20.**

Middle Tennessee at Clemson – The Blue Raiders make their first visit ever to Death Valley, S.C., led by former Clemson assistant Rick Stockstill. The Tigers face Georgia Tech just five days later in Atlanta so they won't be completely focused in this one. Middle Tennessee upset Maryland at home last year, but far better teams have tasted defeat in the Valley. **Clemson by 21.**

Jacksonville State at Georgia Tech – The FCS Gamecocks lost 41-14 to Tech last year. Even with the Clemson game looming the score should be about the same this year. **Georgia Tech by 35.**

Ole Miss at Memphis – Rebel fans are giddy with excitement not seen around Oxford in nearly a half century. Jevan Snead and company should roll easily over a Tiger team that features a porous defense and a plodding offense. **Ole Miss by 24.**

Miami at FSU – An interesting match-up between two former powerhouses trying to rejoin the nation's elite. FSU seems to be closer to reaching that goal than Coach Shannon's Canes. **Florida State by 8.**

Lady Tigers improve to 7-1, set for 3 games next week

The Washington-Wilkes Lady Tigers softball team picked up two big wins last week boosting the season record to 7-1.

On Tuesday, August 25, the Tigers traveled to Oglethorpe County and beat the Patriots 9-4. Cayla Gilland logged the win for W-W pitching a complete game without giving up a single earned runs. Nikki Freeman led the Tigers on offense going 3-for-3 including a double and a homerun.

Other hitters for the Tigers included Yakira Banks (2-3, 3R), Lauren Chafin (1-4), Gabby Lavender (1-2), and Hannah Ward (1-3).

On Thursday, August 27, the Tigers hosted Thomson and came away with a 7-6 win.

The Bulldogs jumped out to a 3-0 lead in the first inning but the Tigers battled back to tie the game in the third with two-out hits from Lavender, Lauren Harrison, and Ashley West. The Tigers tacked on four more runs in the fourth inning

as they capitalized on a couple of walks, two Thomson errors and singles from Ward, Harrison, Gilland, and Alaina Webber.

Thomson rallied for two runs in the fourth off a homerun and scored a single run in the fifth to put the game at 7-6, but that's as close as they would get.

In the seventh inning, Thomson tried to rally but came up short leaving a baserunner stranded at second.

Gilland settled down after a tough start to pick up a complete game, improving her record to 6-0. Leading hitters for the Tigers were Harrison (2-3), Lavender (2-4, 2b), West (1-3), Ward (1-3), Gilland (1-3), and Weber (1-3).

Next week the Tigers will host Elbert County on Tuesday, September 8, and travel to Thomson on Wednesday, September 9, before returning home to host Jefferson County on September 10. All home games begin at 5 p.m.



DEON JACKSON MAKES A BIG GAIN FOR W-W
His longest run was 51 yards and he also scored a touchdown.



Middle school Tigers' season underway

THE WASHINGTON-WILKES MIDDLE SCHOOL TIGERS include (front row, l-r) Scotavious Wilkinson, Marcus Turner, Jackson Armour, Candler Price, Hunter Newsome, Austin Hackney, Dalton Walker, Delvonte Harris, Devarious Smith, Jacorey Burley, Jaquavious Blackburn, Elijah Campbell, (middle row) Clay Lawson, Brannon Saggus, Tremond Ferrell, Terez Norman, Benjamin Hodges, Dalton Cordell, Javoris Grant, Cody Cordell, Andrew Echols, Antonio Graves, Treyvon Booker, Clar-

ence McCord, Quintavious Blackwell, (back) Coach Arthur Crew, Coach Don Keiser, Tae Norman, Tomarcus Young, Jalen Turner, Marcus Hines, Devon Lewis, Jamarr Blackmon, Jonquise Graves, Darryl Ware, Donjai Willis, Kenneth Johnson, Ezequiel Perez, William Etheridge, Coach Jeff Finch, and Coach Tommy Saggus. The young Tigers' next game will be at home in Tiger Stadium next Wednesday, September 9, as they host Wrens beginning at 5 p.m.